DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 533 SO 013 552

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TITLE Trends In High School Seniors' Views of the Military. Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper 12.
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. Inst. for Social Research.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 33p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research Convention (Buck Hills Falls, PA, May 28-31, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *High School Seniors: *Military Service: National Surveys: Secondary Education: Social Science Research: *Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The paper provides an overview of high school seniors' views of the military as an institution, and also as a prospective work role. Data were obtained from the Monitoring the Future project, an ongoing study of high school seniors conducted by the Institute for Social Research. Surveys were mailed to a national sampling of high school senior classes from 1976 through 1980. Students were asked to indicate their views concerning (1) their own possible service in the armed forces: (2) the nature of the job opportunities provided in the military: (3) the military contrasted with other national institutions: and (4) the needs and uses for military power. Findings include the following. Seniors' views about the military as an institution have been most favorable during the past five years, with only a small minority indicating that military influence and spending are too high. However, very few seniors view military service as an acceptable or desirable work setting, and the proportion who do has been shrinking since 1976. There has also been some decline in perceptions that military service provides good opportunities for personal fulfillment or educational advancement, whereas perceptions of discrimination against women in the military have risen sharply. (Author/RM)

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TRENDS IN HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS' VIEWS OF THE MILITARY

Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper 12

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

1981

SO013552

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Pamela Kittel, whose assistance in preparing this paper included preparing analysis runs, organizing data, developing tables, editing, and a variety of other activities that supported the research. Thanks are also due to Patrick O'Malley for reviewing and commenting on an earlier draft of the paper.

ABSTRACT

This paper reports military related plans and attitudes of high school seniors, using questionnaire data from large (N = 16,662 to 18,924) nationally representative surveys of the classes of 1976 through 1980. Seniors' views about the military as an institution have been mostly favorable during the past five years, with only a small minority indicating that military influence and spending are too high. However, very few seniors view military service as an acceptable or desirable work setting, and the proportion who do has been shrinking since 1976. There has also been some decline in perceptions that military service provides good opportunities for personal fulfillment or educational advancement, whereas perceptions of discrimination against women in the military have risen sharply. Since these views are correlated with enlistment intentions, it is not surprising to find that the proportions of seniors expecting military careers, or any military service, has declined since 1976.

NOTE: This paper was presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, held at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, May 28-31, 1981.

Figures used in the presentation are included here at the end of the text.

Introduction

Since 1973 the United States has had an all-volunteer military force (AVF). There was much debate in the late sixties and early seventies about the viability of an AVF, and that debate has continued through the seventies and into the eighties. Although the debate about viability goes on, there is no argument about the fact that the sheer number of young men available for recruitment has been declining as the baby boom generation moves into its twenties. (There is, however, a good deal of discussion and argument about the extent to which the increased recruitment of women can fill the gap.) In any event, so long as the nation operates under the AVF concept, views about the military—particularly the views of youth—will have a critical impact on the staffing of the armed forces.

The present paper provides an overview of high school seniors' views of the military as an institution, and also as a prospective work role. We examine trends from 1976 through 1980 in seniors' views about (a) their own possible service in the armed forces, (b) the nature of the job opportunities provided in the military, (c) the military contrasted with other national institutions, and (d) the needs and uses for military power.

Earlier work indicates that these dimensions are interrelated; specifically, attitudes about job opportunities and fair treatment in the armed forces are positively correlated with plans and preferences for enlistment, especially among males (Bachman, 1978). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that such enlistment plans bear a substantial, though far from perfect, relationship to actual enlistment (Johnston and Bachman, 1972; Segal and Bachman, 1978). The fact that the data are limited to seniors surveyed shortly before graduation means that we omit a substantial segment of current recruits to the military—the high school dropouts. On the other hand, high school graduates are much more preferred by the armed forces because of their higher levels of productivity, fewer disciplinary problems, and substantially lower rates of premature discharge (Moskos, 1980). In sum, we are examining trends in views which are relevant to the enlistment plans and behaviors of a group that is particularly needed, and difficult to recruit, under the current all-volunteer approach.[1]

Methods

The data for this report are obtained from the Monitoring the Future project, an ongoing study of high school seniors conducted by the Institute for Social Research, with primary sponsorship by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The study design has been described extensively elsewhere (Bachman and Johnston, 1978; Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley, 1981; Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley, 1981); briefly, it involves nationally representative surveys of each high school senior class, beginning in 1975, plus follow-up surveys mailed each year to a subset of each senior class sample.

Samples and Questionnaire Administration. This report focuses on the surveys of seniors in the five graduating classes of 1976 through 1980, each surveyed in the spring. (Although many of the survey items reported here were included in the 1975 survey, changes in questionnaire format and response rates reduce comparability—thus the decision to begin with the class of 1976.)

A three-stage probability sampling approach (Kish, 1965) was used each year to select approximately 130 public and private high schools representative of the 48 coterminous states.

The questionnaires were administered by professional interviewers from the Institute for Social Research during school hours, usually in a regularly-scheduled class period. Special procedures were employed to ensure confidentiality, and these procedures were carefully explained in the questionnaire instructions and reviewed orally by the interviewers when they administered the questionnaires.

Student response rates ranged from 77 percent to 83 percent across the five surveys, and obtained sample sizes ranged from 16,662 to 18,924. The numbers of cases are much smaller, however, for data tables presented here. This occurs in part because each annual survey includes five different questionnaire forms, with many items appearing in one form only. Moreover, because of the substantial sex differences in most of the topics covered, data are presented separately for males and females, thus further reducing the numbers of cases underlying any particular statistic.

A Note on Sample Size and Statistical Significance. The tables presented below include notations of the statistical significance of some trends. The tests of significance all include adjustments to take account of sampling design effects—the fact that accuracy is somewhat reduced because each sample of seniors is clustered in about 130 high schools. (See Bachman, Johnston, and O'Malley, 1981, Appendices A and B, for a discussion of design effects in the Monitoring the Future samples and for tables of significant differences incorporating such design effects.)

A more difficult problem is the fact that a large number of differences can be examined in the tables, and a few of those judged significant may in fact have occurred by chance. Moreover, the various trends are not independent, since they are based on the same samples of respondents; and that complicates matters further.

Counterbalancing the problems noted in the previous paragraph is the fact that data are available for five successive senior classes, and most of the trend patterns which emerge are fairly smooth and consistent across a number of years. Indeed, even those shifts which are more abrupt are generally consistent across several different measures, and appear as distinct departures from previous trends. Thus, while a few "statistically significant" findings may actually be due purely to chance, the patterns of findings across several years seem clear enough to warrant a good deal of confidence.

Results

Plans and Preferences for Military Service. Table 1 presents the views of high school seniors in the classes of 1976 through 1980, based on responses to several

Table 1

Plans and Preferences for Military Service[a]

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
How likely is it that you will do each of the following things after high school?												
Percent who check "Probably" or "Definitely" will serve in the Armed Forces	22.2	19.0	18.7	17.6	21.0	-1.2[eg]	7.0	6.3	5.5	5.4	5.4	-1.6**
Suppose you could do just what you'd like and nothing stood in your way. How many of the following things would you want to do?												
Percent who check serve in Armed Forces	19.7	17.9	18.3	15.5	16.6	-3.1**	11.4	11.1	9.8	9.0	7.2	-4.2**[f]
Do you expect to have a career in the Armed Forces?[h]												
No	7.9	7.0	6.6	6.6	8.6	0.7[dg]	2.4	2.1	1.8	2.2	2.0	-0.4
Uncertain	12.9	11.4	11.3	9.7	10.7	-2.2**	4.1	4.1	3.3	2.8	3.2	-0.9
Yes	5.0	4.1	4.3	3.5	4.1	-0.9[e]	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.6	-0.3
What kind of work do you think you will be doing when you are 30 years old?												
% Checking Military Service	4.5	4.7	4.0	3.5	3.0	-1.5	0.9	0.9	0.6	1.0	0.6	-0.3

[a] See also Figure 1.

[b] Weighted N for males ranged from 6824 to 8180 for the first three items, which were in all five questionnaire forms. The male N for the fourth item spanned 1446-1622. Weighted Ns for females ranged from 7470 to 8885, and from 1566 to 1769.

[c] Trend column shows percentage difference from 1976 to 1980. Asterisks represent significance levels: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Approximate N of 7000 was used for the first three items; an N of 1500 was used for the last item.

[d] Percentage difference between 1976 and 1980 not significant; difference between 1976 and 1979 significant at $p < .05$.

[e] Percentage difference between 1976 and 1980 not significant; difference between 1976 and 1979 significant at $p < .01$.

[f] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .05$.

[g] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .01$.

[h] Although the question was only asked of respondents in or planning to enter the armed services, the tabulations shown are based on the total sample N (as estimated by N of following item in the questionnaire).

questions about their own possible service in the armed forces. The first two items included in the table are taken from a larger set of questions which inquired about post-high school educational expectations, as well as service in the armed forces. The initial item in Table 1, which dealt with likelihood of military service, showed a steady decline from 1976 through 1979 in proportions of males who expect to serve; however, in 1980 the proportion rose. The data for females reveal much lower proportions who expected to serve; those proportions declined somewhat from 1976 through 1978, and remained essentially constant from 1978 through 1980.

The second question shown in Table 1 asked each respondent to indicate what s/he would do assuming "...you could do just what you'd like and nothing stood in your way." Among the males, the percentages tracked fairly closely the proportions who indicated in the first question that they "probably" or "definitely" would serve, although from 1976 through 1979 the percentages for the "preference" item ran one or two percent lower than the percentages for the "expectation" item. The 1980 data for males show only a slight rise in the proportion who preferred to serve, in contrast to the larger shift in expectations. Thus it appears that much of the 1980 increase in expectations of military service involved those who did not necessarily view service as preferable—a point to which we return later.

Among female seniors the preferences for military service declined each year from 1976 through 1980. Each year more female seniors "preferred" to serve than "expected" to serve, but the difference in 1980 was somewhat smaller than in 1976.

Turning next to career interests in military service, we can examine two different questionnaire items (the third and fourth in Table 1). One item, asked only of respondents who expected to enter military service, inquired about their expectations of a career in the armed forces. The other item, asked of all respondents in one of the five questionnaire forms, dealt with occupational plans at age 30. For males, responses to the two items were quite similar in overall proportions; moreover, the general trend was downward, although the "career" item showed a slight (non-significant) rise for the class of 1980. For females neither item showed a clear trend over time, and all percentages were quite small. (It is also the case that the "career" item percentages were twice as high as those for the "occupation at age 30" item among females; this may have occurred because other occupational categories—e.g., nurse, technician, manager, etc.—were also available as responses and are not incompatible with a military career.)

In sum, the dominant trend in personal plans and preferences for military service was a decline from 1976 through 1979, with a partial rise in 1980 for males but not for females. We turn next to some of the factors which may be contributing to these trends.

Views About the Military as a Work Setting. Table 2 presents a set of questions which asked respondents for their views about working conditions in the armed forces, and their overall assessment of the acceptability of military service "as a place to work." With the exception of the latter item (which appears first in Table 2), all items in the table are based on earlier research (Bachman, Blair, and Segal, 1977), and all have been found to correlate with enlistment expectations (Bachman, 1978).

The first item in Table 2, a rating of how the military service would measure up as a place to work, was asked in the context of a variety of other work settings such as a small business, a large corporation, a government agency, a social service organization, a police department, etc. The data shown in Table 2 demonstrate that the military has been decreasing in attractiveness more or less steadily since 1976 for both males and females. In 1980 only one in four males, and one in five females, rated it "acceptable" or "desirable" as a work setting. What is not evident from this table is the fact that none of the other work settings had nearly as low a level of acceptability, nor did any other show as strong a trend toward decreased acceptability (see Bachman et al., 1981, 1980a, 1980b; Johnston et al., 1980a, 1980b; Johnston and Bachman, 1980). In other words, military service started at the bottom in 1976 and has been going down since then.

The remaining items in Table 2 may help to explain the above findings. Ratings of various opportunities in the military work role, and ratings of fair treatment or discrimination in the armed forces, have almost all shown a fairly steady erosion from 1976 through 1980. One exception is that perceptions of discrimination against blacks did not shift appreciably during the last half of the seventies. On the other hand, perceptions of discrimination against women in the armed services rose fairly gradually from 1976 through 1979, and then showed a further and sharper increase in 1980.

Views About the Military as an Institution. The Monitoring the Future study includes several sets of items dealing with the honesty, effectiveness, and influence of a variety of institutions including large corporations, labor unions, the news media, the three branches of the federal government, the U.S. military, and several others. (It should be noted that the several sets of questions about institutions were included in different questionnaire forms so that ratings of effectiveness would not be confounded with ratings of honesty or influence, etc.) Table 3 presents trends in ratings of the military, and we will provide some commentary on how these military ratings compare with ratings of other institutions.

The first item in Table 3 indicates that no more than one in four males and one in five females in the classes of 1976 through 1980 felt the leadership of the U.S. military had "considerable" or "great" problems of dishonesty and immorality. These ratings were roughly on a par with ratings of the U.S. Supreme Court, public schools, and colleges and universities; ratings for large corporations, major labor unions, the Congress, the President and administration were all substantially less favorable.

The second item in Table 3 shows that ratings of whether the military has done a good job for the country declined substantially during the past two years. Among male seniors the proportion who rated the military as "good" or "very good" dropped from 58 percent to 38 percent from 1978 to 1980; among females the drop was less severe. As of 1980, the seniors' ratings of the military were about comparable to their ratings of public schools, and somewhat higher than their ratings of the several branches of the federal government, large corporations, and labor unions. The ratings of the military were not, however, nearly as high as the ratings of colleges and universities or the national news media. Perhaps more important than the overall ratings in 1980 is the fact that most of the other institutions did not show substantial changes in their ratings during the late seventies. The noteworthy exceptions, of course, are the U.S. Congress and the President and administration, each of which rose in the 1977 ratings (the start of the Carter administration) and declined each year thereafter.

Table 2

Views About the Military as a Work Setting[a]

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
Apart from the particular kind of work you want to do, how would you rate each of the following settings as a place to work?												
Military Service:												
Not at all acceptable	36.6	42.9	43.6	47.2	44.8	8.2**	41.9	44.9	46.6	50.1	54.0	12.1**
Somewhat acceptable	30.0	28.6	28.4	26.6	30.5	0.5[e]	28.5	30.5	29.3	28.9	26.7	-1.8
Acceptable	20.5	18.0	18.7	18.2	16.1	-4.4**	20.7	16.8	17.7	15.8	14.4	-6.3**
Desirable	12.9	10.4	9.3	7.9	8.5	-4.4**	8.9	7.8	6.4	5.2	4.8	-4.1**
To what extent do you think the following opportunities are available to people who work in the military service?												
Percent who check "great extent" or "very great extent" for each of the following:												
A. A chance to get ahead	30.1	28.5	28.4	25.1	25.9	-4.2*	42.1	39.9	37.9	35.1	33.6	-8.5**
B. A chance to get more education	54.6	51.5	51.9	50.2	46.7	-7.9**	66.6	65.1	61.4	62.5	58.9	-7.7**
C. A chance to advance to a more responsible position	50.1	46.8	49.0	46.7	45.1	-5.0*	59.5	63.0	61.2	58.7	56.4	-3.1[d]
D. A chance to have a personally more fulfilling job	39.8	34.7	39.1	35.9	33.6	-6.2**	48.1	49.6	47.4	46.3	41.7	-6.4**[e]
E. A chance to get their ideas heard	23.2	19.3	22.0	22.6	18.2	-5.0**[e]	26.8	30.0	27.7	27.1	24.8	-2.0[d]
To what extent is it likely that a person in the military can get things changed and set right if he is being treated unjustly by a superior?												
Percent "great" or "very great" extent	16.9	14.7	13.8	13.4	13.8	-3.1*	13.6	14.5	13.0	12.1	9.6	-4.0**

Table 2 (cont.)

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
Do you personally feel that you would receive more just and fair treatment as a civilian or as a member of the military service?												
Percent who check "more fair" or "much more fair" as a civilian	29.6	32.4	30.3	34.0	36.9	7.3**	17.4	17.0	18.2	19.5	21.2	3.8*
Percent who check "more fair" or "much more fair" in the military service	20.1	16.6	19.1	16.0	14.7	-5.4**	16.5	17.7	16.8	15.8	14.3	-2.2
To what extent do you think there is any discrimination against women who are in the armed services?												
Percent "great" or "very great" extent	13.7	14.7	14.9	15.5	22.0	8.3**[f]	15.0	21.5	17.9	18.8	25.9	10.9**[f]
To what extent do you think there is any discrimination against black people who are in the armed services?												
Percent "great" or "very great" extent	11.3	11.2	9.8	9.5	11.7	0.4	9.9	12.5	11.3	9.7	9.6	-0.3

[a] See also Figures 2 through 4.

[b] Weighted N for males ranged from 1276 to 1832. Weighted N for females spanned 1385 to 1740.

[c] Trend column shows percentage difference from 1976 to 1980. , Asterisks represent significance levels; * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Approximate N of 1500 was used.

[d] Percentage difference between 1976 and 1980 not significant; shift between 1977 and 1980 significant at $p < .01$.

[e] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .05$.

[f] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .01$.

Table 3

Views About the Military as an Institution[a]

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
Percent who respond that there are "considerable" or "great" problems of dishonesty and immorality in the leadership of the U.S. Military	22.2	22.0	22.9	25.2	25.6	3.4	18.4	19.4	17.9	18.8	18.1	-0.3
Percent who respond that the U.S. Military is doing a "good" or "very good" job for the country as a whole	58.4	53.5	58.1	45.5	38.2	-20.2**[e]	50.3	52.4	49.2	46.0	42.5	-7.8**
Percent who respond that the U.S. Military's "influence and power in our society" should be. . .												
"more" or "much more"	38.0	34.6	38.8	39.1	48.1	10.1**[e]	30.9	30.6	32.5	31.3	41.6	10.7**[e]
"same as now"	39.6	40.9	40.1	37.1	29.5	-10.1**[e]	40.9	42.5	40.7	41.9	36.0	-4.9*[e]
"less" or "much less"	14.3	15.6	13.5	16.9	13.7	-.6[d]	11.8	9.2	11.0	10.9	9.7	-2.1
"no opinion"	8.1	8.8	7.6	6.9	8.8	.7	16.5	17.7	15.8	15.7	12.8	-3.7*[d]
Percent who respond that the armed services' influence on the way the country is run" is. . .												
"too little" or "far too little"	23.3	21.1	23.4	29.1	42.2	18.9**[e]	21.1	21.6	21.2	23.9	34.3	13.2**[e]
"about right"	62.1	65.6	64.7	57.8	46.5	-15.6**[e]	65.3	68.9	69.4	65.3	56.6	-8.7**[e]
"too much" or "far too much"	14.6	13.3	11.9	13.0	11.4	-3.2*	13.7	9.5	9.4	10.8	9.2	-4.5**
Percent who respond that the U.S. spending on the armed services is. . .												
"too little" or "far too little"	34.5	34.1	38.3	40.6	56.9	22.4**[e]	19.8	22.5	22.9	25.8	39.3	19.5**[e]
"about right"	40.2	40.7	39.7	37.5	26.7	-13.5**[e]	52.1	52.5	51.5	50.6	43.9	-8.2**[e]
"too much" or "far too much"	25.2	25.2	21.8	21.8	16.3	-8.9**[e]	28.1	25.0	25.5	23.5	16.9	-11.2**[e]

[a] See also Figure 5.

[b] Weighted N for males ranged from 1424 to 1719. Weighted N for females spanned 1455-1897.

[c] Trend column shows percentage difference from 1976 to 1980. Asterisks represent significance levels; * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Approximate N of 1500 was used.

[d] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .05$.

[e] Percentage difference between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .01$.

The remaining questions shown in Table 3 all dealt with the issue of whether military influence and spending were too high or too low. The third item in the table, which involved ratings of the military along with other institutions, showed considerable support for increased military influence during the late seventies, plus a ten percent increase in such support as of the spring of 1980. For the class of 1980, the majority of males expressing an opinion felt that the U.S. military's "influence and power in our society" should be increased, while only one in seven thought it should be decreased; among females the proportions at either end of the scale were somewhat smaller. It is of interest to note that the ratings for the military showed considerable similarities to the ratings of the President and administration, especially in 1979 and 1980; in each case the seniors' prescription for declining effectiveness seemed to be an increase in influence. Seniors' ratings of large corporations, on the other hand, showed large (but slightly diminishing) percentages favoring less influence, and very few favoring any increase in corporate influence.

The remaining two questions in Table 3 dealt specifically with the military. The item about "influence on the way the country is run" tells essentially the same story as the item discussed above—a sharp rise in 1980 in the percentage of seniors who felt that the military had "too little" or "far too little" influence. A similar, but even more dramatic, picture is provided by the final item in the table. In the class of 1980, the majority of males and a large minority of females indicated that the U.S. spends "too little" or "far too little" in the armed services, whereas only about one in six felt that military spending was too high. Just four years earlier, the class of 1976 was about evenly divided on the same issue (with males a bit more likely to favor an increase, the opposite true for females, and the modal response for both groups "about right"). Since 1976 the trend in support for increased military spending rose gradually through the class of 1979, and then rose sharply (about 15 percent) in 1980.

Views About Needs and Uses for Military Power. The high school seniors in our surveys have all grown up in the nuclear age; the possibility of nuclear war has existed throughout their lifetimes. A series of questions included in each of the Monitoring the Future annual surveys asked seniors, "Of all the problems facing the nation today, how often do you worry about each of the following?" The first problem presented in the list was "Chance of nuclear war." As the data in Table 4 indicate, the percentages of males and females who report worrying "often" about this possibility have increased dramatically in the past few years. Indeed, going back to 1975 (percentages of 7.2 for males and 7.8 for females, not shown in Table 4), we find that the percentage of males worrying "often" quadrupled in the following five years, while the percentage for females tripled. Although higher percentages of seniors reported worrying "often" about some of the other problems in the list (e.g., crime and violence, or economic problems), no other dimension has shown such a dramatic shift in percentages, either upward or downward. It is also of interest to note the higher percentages of males than females who reported worrying "often" about the chance of nuclear war; no other problem area showed a similar pattern of substantially higher percentages of male worriers, although several areas showed females much more worried than males.

The next two items displayed in Table 4 suggest that at least some of the growing concern about risk of nuclear war is translated into support for U.S. arms superiority. A large and growing majority of seniors disagreed with the assertion

Table 4

Views About Needs and Uses for Military Power[a]

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
Of all the problems facing the nation today, how often do you worry about. . . the chance of nuclear war?												
Never	16.2	14.3	12.7	9.0	6.1	-10.1**[e]	25.3	23.4	24.7	15.9	11.2	-14.1**[e]
Often	12.8	18.1	19.2	22.8	30.1	17.3**[e]	7.9	11.7	10.8	17.5	24.0	16.1**[e]
The U.S. does not need to have greater military power than the Soviet Union												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	62.8	62.8	64.2	67.6	70.0	7.2**	55.0	55.8	57.3	61.9	65.1	10.1**
Neither	15.5	15.7	14.2	13.4	13.2	-2.3*	22.7	22.6	22.9	20.1	18.5	-4.2*
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	21.7	21.4	21.5	19.1	16.9	-4.8**	22.4	21.6	19.9	18.0	16.3	-6.1**
The U.S. ought to have much more military power than any other nation in the world												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	30.5	33.5	31.4	32.5	28.2	-2.3[d]	33.2	32.9	30.9	30.5	26.1	-7.1**[d]
Neither	23.4	22.7	21.1	21.2	20.6	-2.8	30.6	28.0	30.9	27.9	29.2	-1.4
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	46.1	43.7	47.5	46.3	51.2	5.1*[d]	36.1	39.1	38.3	41.6	44.7	8.6**
The U.S. should begin a gradual program of disarming whether other countries do or not												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	72.9	75.2	77.1	76.4	74.0	1.1	51.3	52.0	50.0	52.6	54.3	3.0
Neither	14.1	12.5	11.2	12.0	13.5	-.6	26.7	28.3	28.2	29.0	26.6	-.1
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	13.0	12.5	11.6	11.5	12.4	-.6	22.1	19.7	21.8	18.4	19.0	-3.1*
There may be times when the U.S. should go to war to protect the rights of other countries												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	43.3	41.3	46.9	54.7	40.9	-2.4[e]	47.7	50.7	50.9	59.1	46.9	-.8[e]
Neither	14.8	18.0	16.4	15.3	16.9	2.1	17.5	17.0	16.7	15.2	17.4	-.1
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	41.8	40.6	36.7	30.0	42.4	.6[e]	34.7	32.2	32.4	25.6	35.8	1.1[e]
The U.S. should be willing to go to war to protect its own economic interests												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	18.1	22.3	22.6	22.1	19.5	1.4	21.3	24.0	23.0	25.6	23.7	2.4
Neither	17.3	17.4	16.2	17.1	16.1	-1.2	18.4	19.4	21.4	19.3	20.5	2.0
Agree (Or Mostly Agree)	64.7	60.3	61.3	60.8	64.3	-.4	60.3	56.5	55.7	55.3	55.8	-4.5*

Table 4 (Continued)

	Males[b]						Females[b]					
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Trend[c]
The only good reason for the U.S. to go to war is to defend against an attack on our own country												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	23.0	21.7	23.1	19.5	25.6	2.6[e]	18.4	15.7	18.0	14.7	17.7	-.7[d]
Neither	7.1	7.5	7.2	6.2	8.4	1.3[d]	10.6	9.6	8.3	7.5	8.6	-2.0
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	69.9	70.7	69.7	74.3	66.0	-3.9*[e]	71.1	74.9	73.7	77.8	73.7	2.6[d]
Our present foreign policy is based on our own narrow economic and power interests												
Disagree (or Mostly Disagree)	19.1	19.4	22.0	20.4	18.1	-1.0	15.5	17.5	17.2	15.9	13.8	-1.7
Neither	36.1	37.7	36.5	38.6	36.1	.0	46.6	45.0	46.6	45.8	44.7	-1.9
Agree (or Mostly Agree)	44.8	43.0	41.6	41.1	45.7	.9[d]	37.9	37.6	36.2	38.4	41.4	3.5
If you felt that it was necessary for the U.S. to fight in some future war, how likely is it that you would volunteer for military service in that war?												
I'm sure that I would volunteer I would very likely volunteer I would probably volunteer	43.2	41.6	41.5	43.0	47.0	3.8	18.0	19.9	17.8	18.5	22.4	4.4*[d]
I would probably not volunteer I would very likely not volunteer I would definitely not volunteer	39.1	41.2	40.3	37.8	37.3	-1.8	52.1	52.4	53.0	52.8	55.4	3.3
In my opinion, there is no such thing as a "necessary" war	17.6	17.2	18.0	19.1	15.8	-1.8[d]	29.8	27.6	29.3	28.7	22.2	-7.6**[e]

[a]See also Figure 6.

[b]Weighted N for males ranged from 1325 to 1836. Weighted N for females spanned 1420-1849.

[c]Trend column shows percentage difference from 1976 to 1980. Asterisks represent significance levels; * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Approximate N of 1500 was used.

[d]Percentage shift between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .05$.

[e]Percentage shift between 1979 and 1980 significant at $p < .01$.

that "the U.S. does not need to have greater military power than the Soviet Union." The somewhat stronger statement that the U.S. should have "much more" military power than any other nation showed a rise in support, particularly during the last one or two years. As the fourth item in Table 4 indicates, few seniors in the late seventies were supportive of the U.S. initiating a gradual program of unilateral disarmament.

The next four items in Table 4 bear on the possible uses of U.S. military power. The overall pattern of responses presents a somewhat mixed picture. Roughly seventy percent of seniors from 1976 through 1980 agreed or agreed mostly that "the only good reason for the U.S. to go to war is to defend against an attack on our own country." Nevertheless, about sixty percent tended to agree that "the U.S. should be willing to go to war to protect its own economic interests," and opinion was divided roughly equally on the statement that "there may be times when the U.S. should go to war to protect the rights of other countries." The rather critical statement that "our present foreign policy is based on our own narrow economic and power interests" prompted twice as much agreement as disagreement, although large proportions of seniors elected the "neither" response to this item. The responses to these four items showed rather little overall shift, comparing the classes of 1976 and 1980; however, a shorter-term phenomenon can be detected in the responses of the last few senior classes. To some extent in 1978, but much more strongly in 1979, there was an increased resistance to the idea of U.S. military action to protect the rights of other countries, and an increased agreement with the idea that the U.S. should go to war only to defend against attack. In 1980, however, the responses looked very similar to those for the class of 1976, reflecting an appreciable shift toward a "harder line" position.

The final item shown in Table 4 is clearly speculative in its content; nevertheless, responses to this item seem to be related to a number of the dimensions and trends presented earlier. The question asks whether the respondent would be likely to volunteer for military service "...if YOU felt it was necessary for the U.S. to fight in some future war." Among male high school seniors in 1977 and 1978 the proportions who thought they would volunteer and those who thought they would not were roughly equal; in 1979 the balance shifted somewhat in the direction of more volunteers; and in 1980 the percentage of likely volunteers increased further. Although the proportion of likely volunteers among female seniors was consistently much lower than among males, the female proportion also showed an upward shift in 1980. Perhaps equally significant is the fact that 1980 marked a drop in the proportions of both males and females who chose the response "In my opinion, there is no such thing as a 'necessary' war."

Military Service Preferences Versus Expectations. We reported earlier that both expectations and preferences for serving in the armed forces had been declining throughout the late seventies, but that the data for males in 1980 showed a rise in expectations and a smaller rise in preferences. Now we turn to an examination of the relationship between the preferences and expectations. We maintain the practice of examining data separately for males and females; additionally we distinguish between those who do and do not plan to complete college, since inclinations toward military service are substantially lower among the college-bound.

Table 5 presents the relevant data for the class of 1980, and also shows the ways in which these data have shifted from the pattern shown by the class of 1979. An examination of the table prompts a number of observations; we begin with those based on the class of 1980, and then turn to the shifts from 1979 to 1980.

The most general observation based on Table 5 is that for most respondents preferences matched expectations. Thus, for example, most of those who did not indicate that they would prefer to serve also expected that they "probably" or "definitely" would not serve. There were also, however, substantial proportions of seniors whose preferences and expectations were mismatched, and these mismatches varied among subgroups in ways that are noted below. Two other general observations confirm what has already been noted: both preferences and expectations were lower among females, and among those seniors who planned to finish college.

One kind of mismatch involves those who indicated that they would want to serve if they could do just what they would like and nothing stood in the way, but who also indicated that they were not likely actually to serve. Among college-bound males, just over one third of all those who preferred to serve considered it unlikely they actually would. Among the non-college-bound males, the comparable proportion was less than one quarter. Nevertheless, in each case this represented about five percent of all males, a subgroup large and important enough to warrant further exploration in future analyses. Among females about half of all those who said they would prefer to serve did not expect to do so—just over half of the college-bound and just under half of the others. Since this represents just under four percent of all female seniors, it is another subgroup worthy of further exploration.

The opposite kind of mismatch involves those who did not indicate that they would want to serve if they could do just as they'd like, but nevertheless expected to serve. Although this was infrequent among females (fewer than two percent of the total), it occurred more often among college-bound males (about seven percent) and still more often among non-college-bound males (about eleven percent). To put it a different way, among the small number of males who "definitely" expected to serve, about one in five did not indicate a preference to do so; and among the larger group of males who expected they "probably" would serve, fewer than half indicated that they wanted to.

The mismatch described in the preceding paragraph was greater for the class of 1980 than for the class of 1979, as shown in Table 5. This holds true for both males and females, irrespective of college plans. Although the percentage differences are not large, they are consistent in direction and several are large enough to meet the criterion of statistical significance. Another shift occurred from 1979 to 1980 for all groups and fits well with the one just described: among seniors who indicated that they did not prefer to serve, there was a decline in the proportion who said they "definitely" would not serve and an increase in the proportion who said they "probably" would not. In sum, the large majority of the class of 1980, like their predecessors, preferred not to serve; however, they were less sure that they would be able to avoid service, and there was an appreciable increase in that category of seniors who expected that they would serve even though that was not necessarily their preference.

Among the other differences between the classes of 1979 and 1980, the most noteworthy is the increase in the proportion of non-college-bound males who

Table 5

Military Service Preferences Versus Expectations,
Shown Separately for College-Bound and Non-College-Bound;
Class of 1980 Compared with Class of 1979*

Expect to complete 4 Yrs. of college?	Would you prefer to serve in military?	How likely is it you will serve in armed forces?									
		Males					Females				
		Def. won't	Prob. won't	Prob. will	Def. will	Total	Def. won't	Prob. won't	Prob. will	Def. will	Total
Class of 1980											
Yes	Yes	0.6	4.0	5.3	3.3	13.2	0.8-	3.0	2.2	0.7	6.6-
	No	47.0--	33.1	5.5++	1.2+	86.8	71.2--	20.6++	1.4	0.3	93.4+
	Total	47.6--	37.2	10.7++	4.5	100.0 N=3980	71.9--	23.6++	3.6	0.9	100.0 N=3984
No	Yes	0.8	4.2	8.2	9.0++	22.2+	1.0	2.8	2.5	1.7	8.0
	No	33.9--	32.7	9.3	1.9+	77.8-	72.9	17.1+	1.7	0.2	92.0
	Total	34.7--	36.9	17.5	10.9++	100.0 N=2816	73.9	20.0+	4.2	1.9	100.0 N=3313
Class of 1979											
Yes	Yes	1.1	3.8	4.7	3.4	13.0	1.6	3.5	2.3	0.8	8.2
	No	51.8	31.2	3.5	0.6	87.0	74.7	16.0	0.8	0.2	91.8
	Total	52.9	35.0	8.1	4.0	100.0 N=3697	76.3	19.5	3.1	1.0	100.0 N=3893
No	Yes	0.5	4.2	7.9	6.5	19.1	1.5	2.9	3.5	1.7	9.7
	No	40.5	31.6	7.6	1.0	80.9	75.0	14.1	1.1	0.1	90.3
	Total	41.0	35.9	15.5	7.5	100.0 N=3024	76.5	17.0	4.6	1.9	100.0 N=3510

*The upper portion of the table contains data based on the senior class of 1980, the lower portion is based on the class of 1979. Within each class, data are presented separately for four subgroups defined according to sex and college plans. Cell entries are percentages of the total subgroup; thus, the upper left-hand entry in the table indicates that 0.6% of all college-bound males in the class of 1980 preferred military service but expected that they definitely would not serve. (See Table 1 for item wordings.)

Statistically significant differences between the classes of 1979 and 1980 are shown (only) in the upper portion of the table as follows:

+ Class of 1980 higher than class of 1979, $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
++ Class of 1980 higher than class of 1979, $p < .01$ (two-tailed).
- Class of 1980 lower than class of 1979, $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
-- Class of 1980 lower than class of 1979, $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

indicated that they both preferred and expected to serve. By way of contrast, the comparable category among the college-bound males showed no shift. Thus it is clear that the modest increase in the percentage of males who stated a preference for serving in the armed forces occurred entirely among the non-college-bound.

Discussion

Before discussing some of the trends reported above, it should be acknowledged explicitly that these trends are inferred from a comparison of different senior class cohorts. I think it is most reasonable to suppose that the differences between senior classes in the past several years reflect secular trends—i.e., they would be evident in a fairly parallel pattern by year if we examined data from sophomores and juniors as well as seniors, or if we looked at responses of those several years beyond high school. (The latter, incidentally, is something we may eventually be able to do with follow-up data available from the Monitoring the Future project.) There are several reasons for supposing that we are dealing with broad secular trends by no means limited to high school seniors. First of all, a number of recent events (noted below) seem likely to have influenced views about the military. Additionally, other sets of trend data based on other populations are closely parallel to those reported here (see Segal, 1981, for a summary of several of these).

The last half decade has witnessed increased tensions in the Middle East, Soviet military action in Afghanistan, much debate about the nuclear arms race and the SALT II treaty, and more than a year in which we were nightly reminded about "the U.S. held hostage." There was also much national debate about the success or failure of the AVF, the problems with military pay scales failing to keep pace with inflation, short-falls in quality as well as quantity in military recruiting, and the possibility that the nation would be better served by a return to conscription. And if all that were not enough, women were admitted to the service academies for the first time; and their successes and failures and feelings of discrimination were the subjects of frequent news reports, documentaries, and dramas. In short, a good deal has been happening which might reasonably be expected to have an impact on views about the military.

One of the impacts of these events has been a growing support for U.S. military superiority, and for increases in military spending and influence. As noted earlier, these overall trends have appeared in surveys of adult cross-sections as well as in our surveys of high school seniors. We also noted that support for military spending rose more sharply among seniors in 1980 than did their support for military influence; this could represent, at least in part, their reaction to the recent publicity about low military salaries as a problem in the AVF.

But although seniors from 1976 through 1980 have shown increased support for a "strong" military establishment, they have not shown a growing interest or willingness to become part of that establishment themselves. To the contrary, their perceptions of the military as a work role have eroded steadily during that period. The proportions of seniors expecting, and preferring, to serve also declined during that period. Among males, but not among females, 1980 saw some rise in expectations of service; however, much of this change was not paralleled by any increase in the proportion saying that military service is what they would prefer if they were free to do what they want. That latter finding is not especially large, nor

is it easy to interpret. It may be that some young men feel a duty to military service even though they would prefer to do other things. Other seniors, particularly in the class of 1980, may have been responding in part to the increased attention focused on registration and the possibility of a draft. Still others may be anticipating "economic conscription"—the need to enlist because no better alternatives are available. In this connection it is useful to recall that the 1980 rise in preferences for military service occurred entirely among non-college-bound males, the ones more likely to feel the economic push toward military service brought about by a poor civilian job market.[2]

The data presented here have been largely descriptive. Much more detailed and sophisticated treatment of our survey findings would be possible, and we hope in the future to be able to carry out such analyses. In addition, of course, we are eager to see another year of trend results, based on our just completed survey of seniors in the class of 1981. Meanwhile, although the present analyses are limited in several respects, they do seem to have implications for policy, a few of which are noted below.

Policy Issues. Perhaps the most serious finding in the present report, at least from the standpoint of the viability of the AVF, is the continuing erosion of high school seniors' perceptions of the military service as a potential work role. It seems likely that this shift reflects some underlying realities; Segal (1981) has recently noted that job satisfaction seems to be declining among those who are in the armed services. Obviously, if the experience of military service is disappointing to increasing numbers of new recruits, this information will quickly be fed back to their younger siblings and friends; this, plus the increased media attention to difficulties in the AVF, may underlie much of the recent shift in seniors' views about job opportunities in the military. This is really part of the "market test" aspect of the AVF, and it represents much more than salary levels. It has often been acknowledged that making the AVF work will require satisfying working conditions—including some sense of dignity and mission, as well as decent pay. Our current findings suggest that this is an area requiring increased attention. And some would argue that one of the successes of the all-volunteer approach is that it requires that such problems be confronted; it is not feasible to overlook them in the face of declining enlistments.

Another policy issue has to do less with trends than with consistent differences between males and females. It is interesting that female seniors' views of the military work role, on the average, are a bit more positive than male seniors' views. Given that such views are positively correlated with enlistment expectations, it is perhaps surprising that relatively few females expect to serve. One possible explanation is that many females treat the military work role largely at an abstract level rather than considering it as a role that they themselves might enter. Indeed, it turns out that female seniors' views about the military work role are less strongly correlated with their preferences and expectations about enlistment than is the case for males (Bachman, 1978). Although the proportion has been declining during the past few years, it still remains true that there are some female seniors who might want to serve but do not expect to do so. At present, one of the things which may stand in their way is the increasing perception—among both males and females—that women in the armed services are discriminated against to a considerable extent.

One further policy issue is the extent to which the AVF appeals not just to those who complete high school but also to those expecting to complete college. For a number of years it has been argued that increased reliance on educational incentives (rather than the reduction which has occurred in recent years) would bring in more of the college-bound, and thus help to deal with AVF problems of demographic balance as well as the needs for higher levels of ability and motivation (Bachman, Blair, and Segal, 1977). More recently, specific proposals have been offered to provide a paid college education in return for a tour of duty in the armed forces (e.g., Moskos, 1980; Moskos and Janowitz, 1980; Janowitz, 1981). Our findings indicate clearly that the college-bound are presently less attracted to military service than other high school seniors are; however, the gap is not overwhelming. Moreover, there remains a small but important subgroup of college-bound seniors whose responses suggest that they might want to serve even though they do not expect to do so. Our current survey includes several items dealing with paid college in return for military service; we are eager to see just who and how many in the class of 1981 think that such a program would make a difference in their own plans for military service.

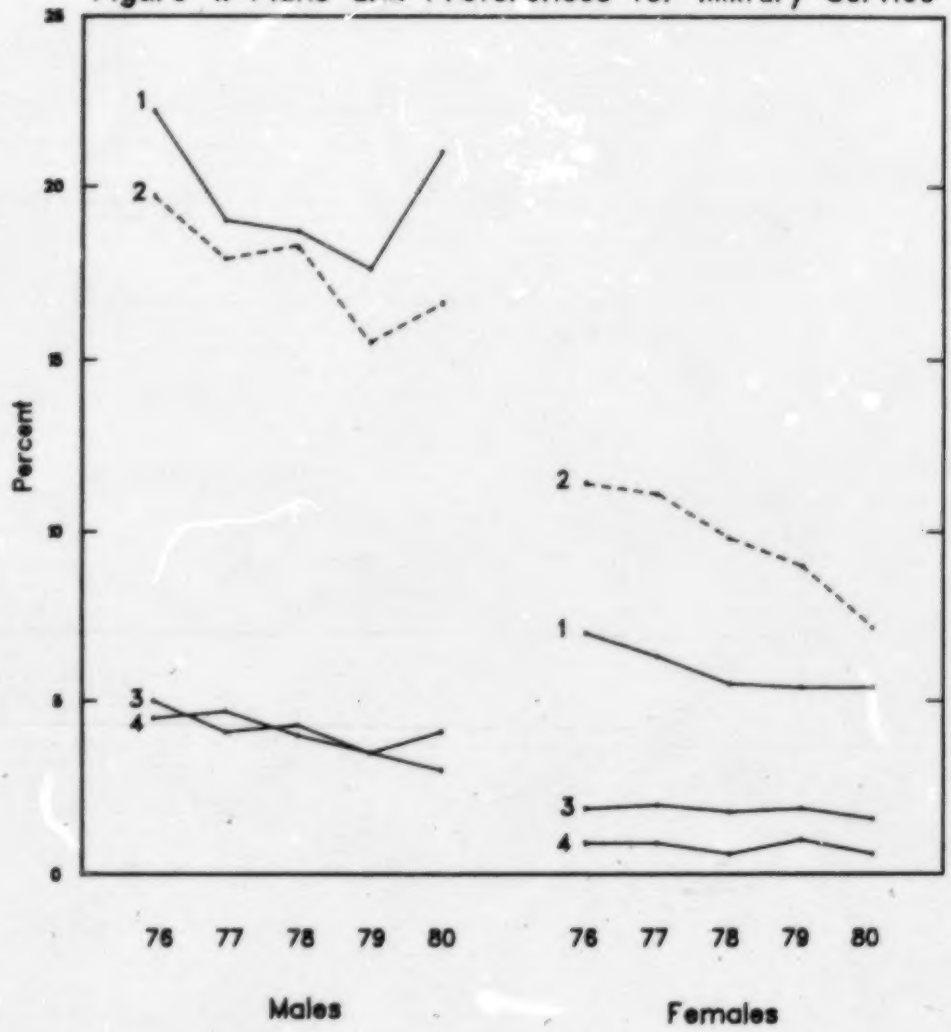
FOOTNOTES

[1]A very recent report in the Army Times (May 18, 1981, p. 12), which appeared after the text of this paper was completed, revealed a sharp increase in the proportion of high school graduates among new recruits. We return to this new finding in our discussion.

[2]As noted in Footnote 1, the Army Times has just reported a rise in the proportion of high school graduates among new recruits. More specifically, for the first half of fiscal 1981 (beginning in October, 1980), 73% of all male accessions were high school graduates, compared with only 54% for the first half of fiscal 1980. Among females the percentage of high school graduates rose from 79% to 89% during the same interval. The Army Times article notes that this improvement in educational level was apparent during the six month interval following the institution of an 11.7% pay rise in October, 1980. But it is a matter of considerable interest that our own data on high school seniors' expectations seemed to anticipate the increase in male high school graduates entering the armed services. This is an area worth more careful scrutiny as the necessary data become available.

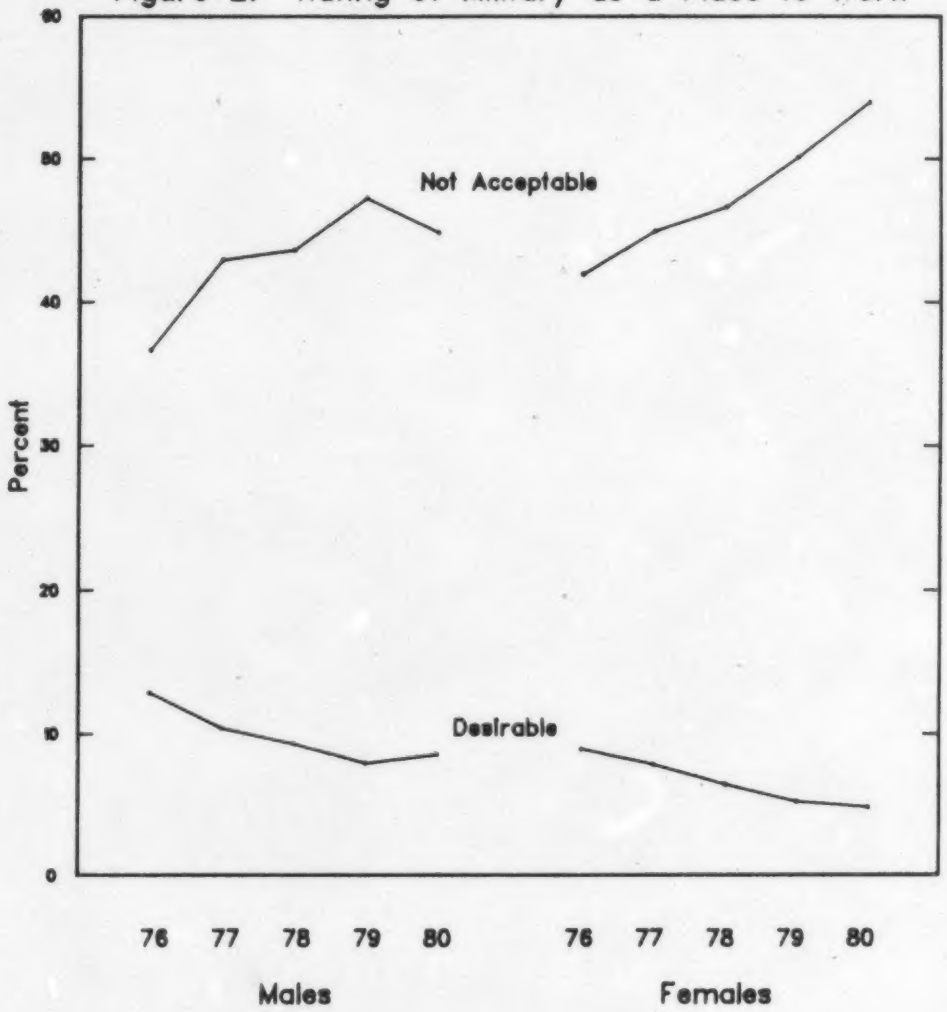
FIGURES

Figure 1: Plans and Preferences for Military Service



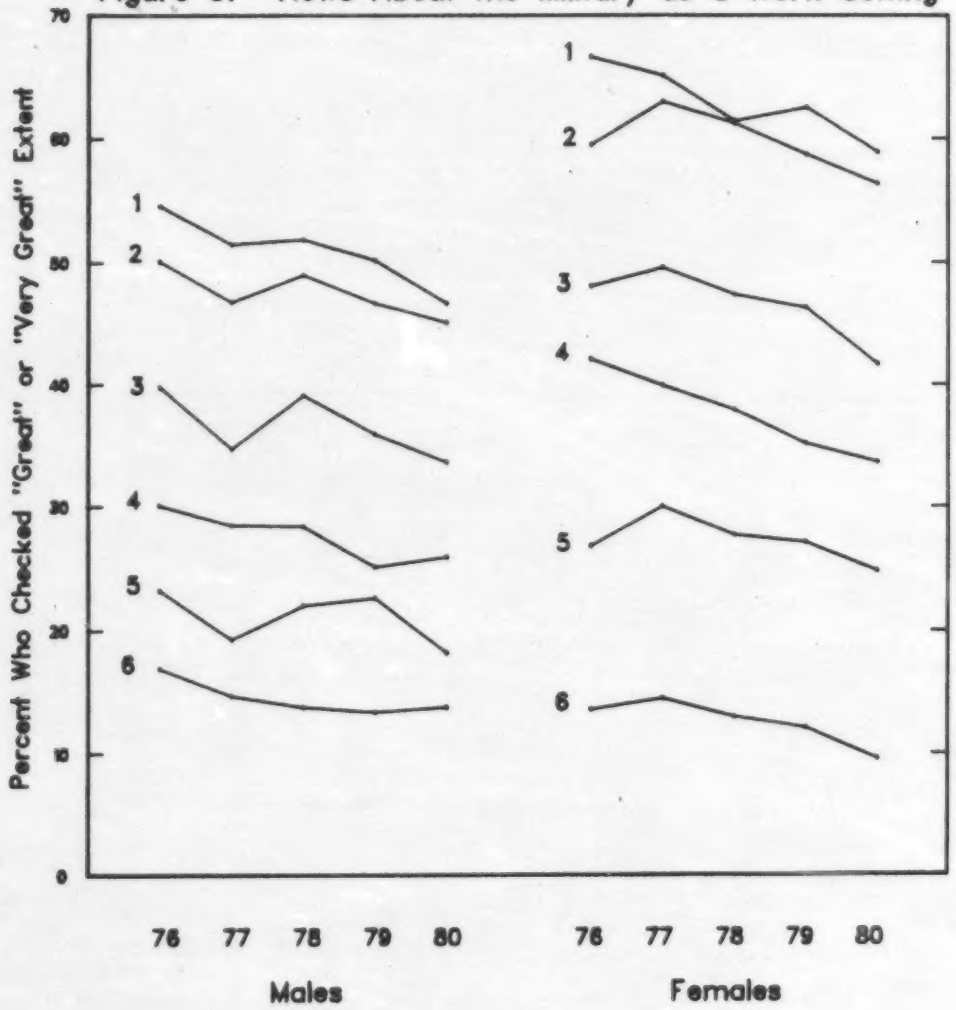
1. "Probably" or "Definitely" will serve in the Armed Forces.
2. Would like to serve in the Armed Forces if nothing stood in the way.
3. Expect to have a career in the Armed Forces.
4. Expect occupation at age 30 to be military service.

Figure 2: Rating of Military as a Place to Work



Question was, "Apart from the particular type of work you want to do, how would you rate each of the following settings as a place to work?
d. Working in the military service."

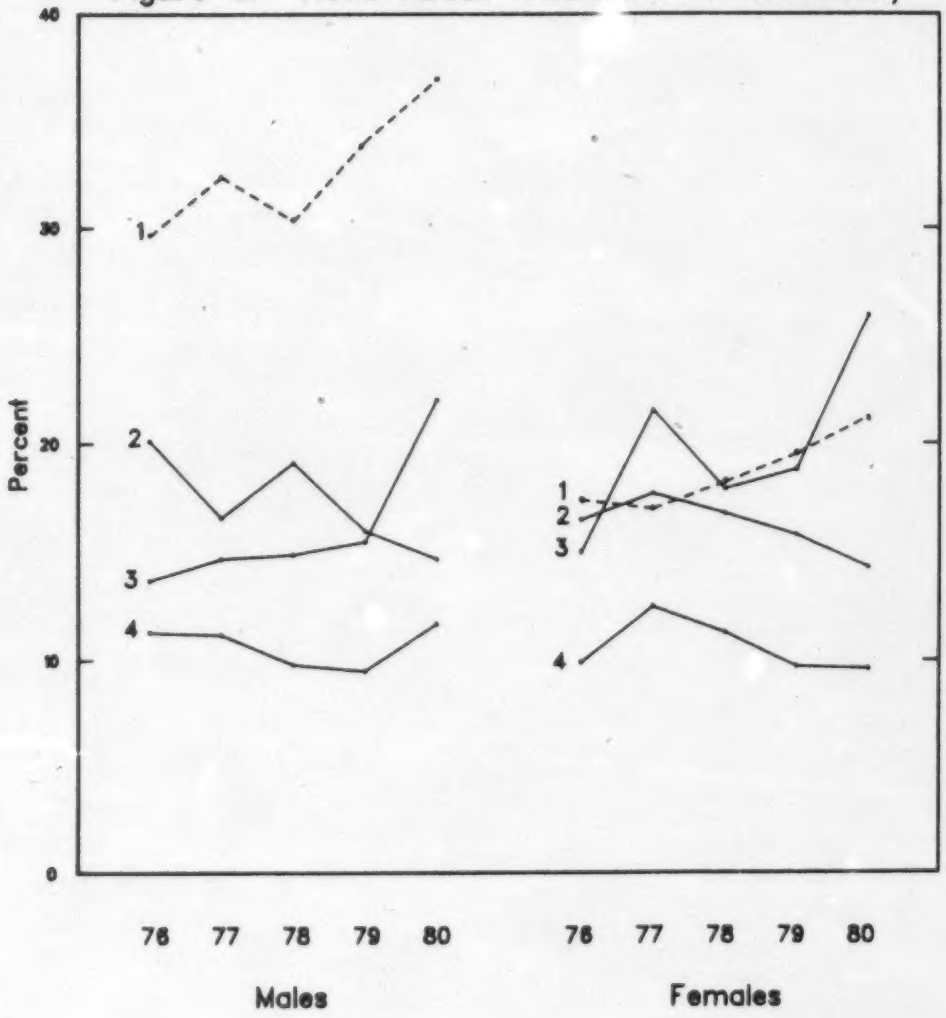
Figure 3: Views About the Military as a Work Setting



To what extent do people who work in the military service have a chance to...

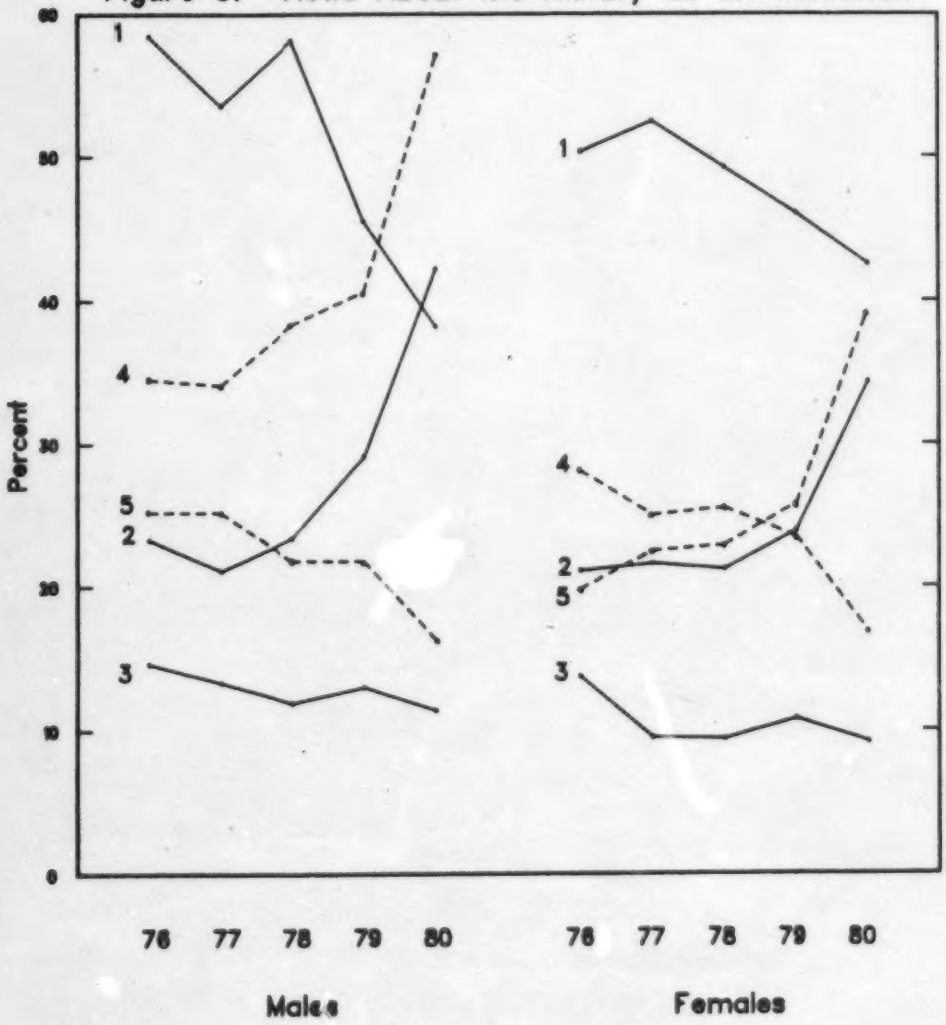
1. Get more education?
2. Advance to more responsible position?
3. Have a personally more fulfilling job?
4. Get ahead?
5. Get their ideas heard?
6. Get things set right if treated unjustly by a superior?

Figure 4: Views About Treatment in the Military



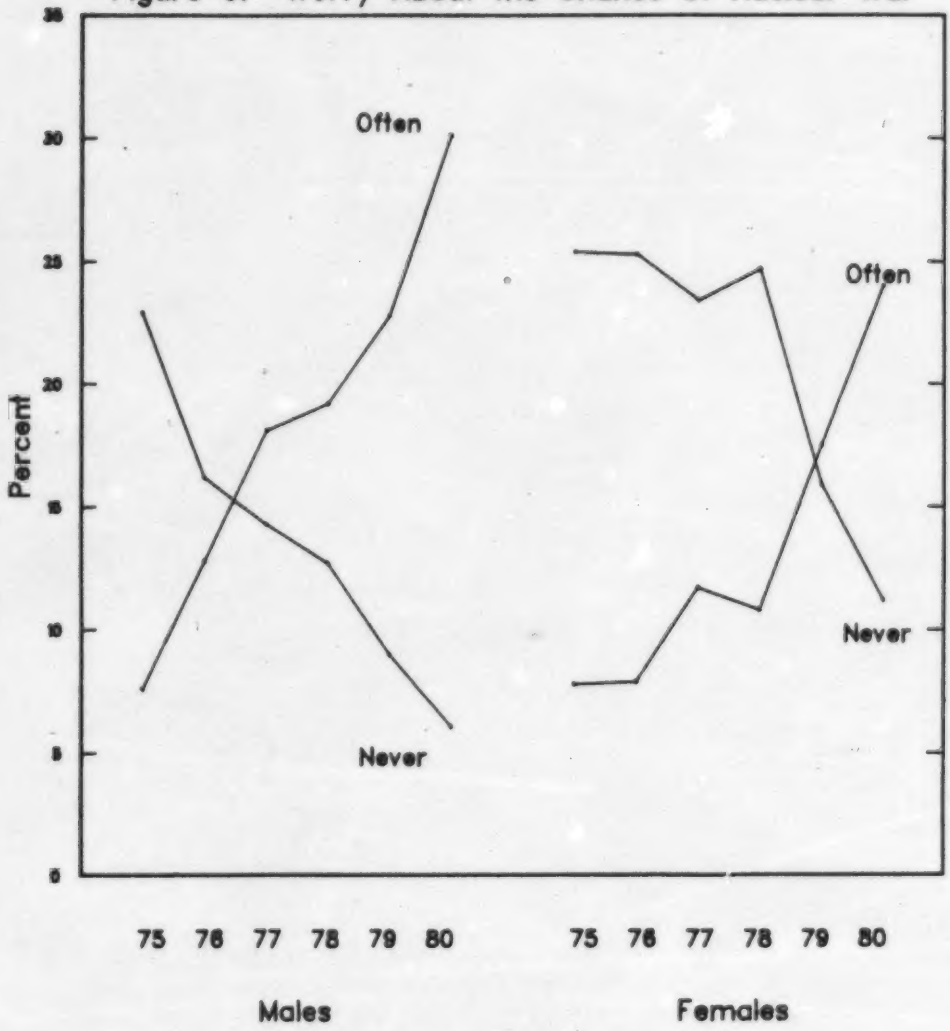
1. Expect to receive more just and fair treatment as a civilian.
2. Expect to receive more just and fair treatment in the military.
3. Perceive "great" or "very great" discrimination against women in military service.
4. Perceive "great" or "very great" discrimination against black people in military service.

Figure 5: Views About the Military as an Institution



1. Rate military as doing a "good" or "very good" job for country as a whole.
2. Rate armed services' influence on the country as too little.
3. Rate armed services' influence on the country as too much.
4. Rate spending on the armed services as too little.
5. Rate spending on the armed services as too much.

Figure 6: Worry About the Chance of Nuclear War



Question was, "Of all the problems facing the nation today, how often do you worry about...a) the chance of nuclear war?"

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